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# CHURCH UNION THAT UNITES

## I

## THE CHICAGO CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL OF CITY MISSIONS

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Church unity at last. Not the sort of union which segregates a certain number of people gathered from several existing denominations in a union church. Such churches, to all intents and purposes, are new denominations. Not a talk-fest on the beautiful text "that they all may be one." But a real unity of endeavor, adjustment, and achievement in the entire local field covered by five great denominations has been reached in Chicago. No formal organic union has been undertaken nor is it contemplated, for it has not been found necessary. What has been accomplished is a unity which preserves all the individuality, historical value, doctrinal strength, and spiritual dynamic of each denomination and brings them together, unfettered and unembarrassed, to wage a single battle against a common foe. We have five camps, but one firing-line.

The Co-operative Council of City Missions is the agency through which this wonder has been wrought in Chicago.

Five years have elapsed since the council was formed and they surely furnish a sufficiently long period to try out the project and ascertain its real value. The writer has no hesitation in saying that were the council now abolished its loss would be regarded as

a calamity by all who have shared in its activities and benefits.

The council is composed of thirty men comprising the missionary secretaries and five other members of the Home Mission and Church Extension societies of the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Disciples churches. They represent an aggregate membership of 122,000, of which 30,000 are Baptist, 30,000 Presbyterian, 34,000 Methodist, 22,000 Congregational, and 6,000 Disciples.

In former days each carried on its missionary and extension work with little regard to what others were doing, and new districts were regarded as unclaimed land in which all had mining rights. Whoever failed to claim such rights was regarded as lacking in denominational enterprise and real solicitude for the salvation of mankind. As a result we find one scattering suburb with a population of about 5,500 people containing fourteen churches, each of which could file a bill against the community any day for nonsupport. Another district about one-half mile square, fairly populated, has thirteen meager churches striving with small success to live and love. Another large and very desirable suburb has fourteen churches, six of which belong to one denomination which, it appears,

once sought by superior strength and alertness to capture the field and exclude all others.

Of course many sections of the city are without proper church facilities, and the congested river districts, where hundreds live in a block, have always been repellent to the sort of denominational zeal which makes the previously described conditions possible. The day of such misguided zeal is rapidly passing and similar mistakes are not likely to be repeated.

Under the new régime large downtown districts have been surveyed with the purpose of ascertaining what work could still be maintained with success.

A large residential district fourteen miles long was jointly investigated. Two denominations already having four churches each within the territory were advised to plant no more; but the other three denominations were urged to plant two churches each within the prescribed area as soon as conditions warranted. Two of the latter have taken advantage of the support of the council and have entered the above field, the council first having approved their plans.

A common policy has been adopted for the prosecution of missionary work among foreigners, the principles of which are as follows:

1. Where several denominations are now carrying on successful missionary enterprises among the foreigners in a given district, they shall continue their work. If, however, past experience shows that these enterprises are so near one another as to create harmful competition, steps shall be taken to effect a consolidation of them if possible. The districts where such missions are maintained shall be noted and their boundaries determined.

2. Where denominational missionary enterprises have been carried on among foreigners in a given district with small success, the representatives shall study the field together for the purpose of uniting all the work done in that district at one or two points, with the purpose of securing at least one Protestant mission which shall be strong enough to be effective. Such combinations might be made by a mutual exchange of property in different localities.

3. So far as possible in future work, we propose that the work for a given nationality be committed to one denomination with the idea that that denomination shall make a special study of the methods of reaching the people assigned to it and shall develop such methods as shall prove effective in carrying to them the gospel. Where the numbers of a nationality are so great that all should work among them, different districts should be assigned to different denominations.

4. The co-operating denominations are respectfully requested to begin no new work among foreigners without first conferring with the Co-operative Council and securing its approval.

At the present time a committee is drawing up a doctrinal and parliamentary basis for the formation of a co-operative Chinese church in which it will be possible for the five co-operating denominations to combine their mission work among the Chinese without confusing them with denominational differences. When such a plan has been wrought out, we expect to erect a building in co-operation with the Y.M.C.A. to provide a spiritual and social center for these strangers, that shall keep its welcoming doors open for them seven days in the week.

Perhaps a glance at the business done at the last meeting will be sufficient to

show how thoroughgoing is the work and how honest and practical is the co-operative relation between the churches involved. Among the items of business transacted at the last regular meeting of the council were the following:

1. The Presbyterians and Methodists were eager to enter a given field where there was room for only one church. The Baptist secretary was appointed to investigate the field and report. On the basis of his report the council advised both Methodists and Presbyterians to refrain from organizing churches or erecting new buildings, as another denomination was found to be more numerously represented than either in that field. The advice of the council was accepted as final and will be followed.

2. The Presbyterians desired to establish a church in a new field which they believed to be needy and not covered by the work of others. Their request was referred to the Committee on Residential Districts for investigation and report. All the surrounding churches will be located on a map, their exact distance from the proposed location ascertained, the density of population and nationalities in the neighborhood will be considered before the council will grant the request.

3. The Methodists desired to locate a church in a given place, but a committee composed of a Baptist, a Presbyterian, and a Congregationalist reported unfavorably and suggested that another place be selected.

4. A plan of union arranged between the churches of two denominations in a suburban community was submitted to the council for its approval. The plan

of agreement had been drawn up with elaborate care. The secretaries of two denominations not involved in the arrangement took the document in hand and promptly discovered certain provisions which were eliminated. The plan as finally approved by the council was unanimously adopted by both of the churches interested.

5. A subcommittee of three was appointed to consider the appeals of some colored churches desiring to solicit contributions from the business men of the city. All such cases are referred by the Association of Commerce to the council for investigation and approval. The subcommittee will ascertain the character of the work being done by the applicants and whether they have any valid reason for calling upon the general public for help, and will report their findings. Undoubtedly the action of the Association of Commerce will be in harmony with their report.

The examples cited above will serve to illustrate the freedom, vigor, and fairness with which the council handles the matters referred to it. It has no formal authority and assumes to act only in an advisory capacity. But the wisdom and justice displayed in its past dealings give to its findings almost the weight of an ultimatum. There is not a case on record where the definite advice of the council has been intentionally ignored.

Its activities as defined in the constitution are:

To further the co-operation of the various Protestant city mission societies in Chicago, in:

a) The evangelization of the foreign population of the city.

b) The maintenance of churches in the central portion of the city.

c) The establishment of new churches in the residential portions of the city.

There are four permanent committees, viz.: (1) the Executive Committee, consisting of the chairman of the council and the secretaries of the five co-operating denominations; (2) the Committee on Foreign Populations; (3) the Committee on Downtown Districts; (4) the Committee on Residential Districts.

Special committees to handle other matters not properly belonging to the above committees are appointed as needed.

One of the standing items on the docket of our regular procedure is "Reports from each of the co-operating societies as to their work during the past month and the announcement in advance of plans being formed for further work."

In working out its plans the Co-operative Council holds regular monthly meetings and many friendly informal conferences.

New territory is investigated under united supervision and all seek to stand

for the rights of each. Free and frank discussion clears away many misunderstandings where interests appear to clash.

Among the many beneficial results are to be found:

a) The consideration of the interests of the community rather than the apparent interest of a denomination.

b) Helping the right church to the right place.

c) Avoiding duplication.

d) Cutting out the spurious enterprises.

e) Missions located in this way do a more substantial work.

f) The hearty approval of the community at the sight of denominations working together in such actual unity.

g) Best of all is the mutual confidence and perfect understanding arising out of our fraternal labors in a common cause. Though enlisted under different banners, the association of the brethren in the work of the council in a common cause develops so warm a friendship that all banners now look to us very much alike, and the sign of the cross on each appears to be the chief ornament of all.

#### **Constitution of the First Chinese Evangelical Church of Chicago**

##### **Name**

1. The name of this church shall be the First Chinese Evangelical Church of Chicago.

##### **Membership**

2. Its membership shall be composed of Chinese who have learned to love and trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, and who are trying to be like him and have made a public profession of their faith in baptism.

##### **Officers**

3. Its officers shall be a minister, two deacons, three trustees, a clerk, a Sunday-school superintendent, a treasurer, and a Board of Management appointed by the Co-operative Council of

City Missions. The officers of the church shall be elected by the church upon the approval of the Board of Management.

##### **Duties of the Officers**

4. (a) It shall be the duty of the pastor to preach and to conduct such other religious services as may be necessary for the promotion of the work of the church.

(b) The deacons shall assist the pastor at the communion, if necessary, and in caring for the poor, and, in the absence of the pastor, shall conduct prayer-meetings and other religious services as may be needed, and, in connection with the pastor and the Board of Management, shall

have power to receive members into the church.

(c) It shall be the duty of the trustees to plan for raising money and to look after the finances of the church, under the direction of the Board of Management.

(d) The clerk shall keep a careful record in a book provided for this purpose of all meetings held by the church for the transaction of business. In this record shall be kept the names and addresses of the members, when received and when dismissed, and whatever else may be of interest.

(e) The superintendent shall conduct the Sunday school and also advise with the officers and the Board of Management respecting the interests of the church.

(f) The treasurer shall keep an account of all moneys received by him for the support of the church or for benevolent purposes, and shall pay out the same as ordered by the Board of Management. He shall make an annual report to the church and shall report, also, at such other times as the church or Board of Management may direct.

(g) The Board of Management, appointed by the Co-operative Council, shall consist of two members of the Co-operative Council from each of the denominations co-operating in supporting and conducting the Chinese Church. The Board of Management shall consult with the officers of the church and shall hold meetings in the church at stated intervals, and shall direct all of its affairs, and their judgment on all questions shall be final, subject to review by the Co-operative Council of City Missions.

5. The pastor shall hold his office for one year or more, as may be agreed upon by the Board of Management after consulting with the

officers of the church. All the other officers, with the approval of the Board of Management, shall hold office for one year.

6. (a) This church is founded upon the fundamental truths of the gospel.

(b) This church will instruct its members from the Scriptures with regard to the fatherhood of God, the divinity and saving grace of Jesus Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures, the sanctity of the Lord's Day, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the fundamental necessity of living daily with God's help in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

(c) Members shall be publicly received into fellowship in the church upon the following confession of faith in Jesus Christ: "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and accept him as my Savior and Guide."

#### **Amendments**

7. This constitution may be amended upon the approval of a two-thirds vote of the members of the church at an annual meeting, or at any regular business meeting, by the approval of the Board of Management.

#### **By-Laws**

1. The annual meeting of the church shall be held on the second Monday evening of December of each year, at such time and place as the Board of Management may direct. Business meetings may be called at such times as the Board of Management may deem necessary.

#### **Amendments**

2. These by-laws may be amended at any regular meeting of the church by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, with the approval of the Board of Management.

### **Articles for the Federation of the Baptist and Methodist Churches of Mosier, Oregon**

Prepared by J. R. Hargreaves

**ARTICLE 1.** This federation shall be called the Immanuel Church (Baptist and Methodist).

**ART. 2.** Its purpose shall be the teaching of the gospel and plan of ethics as taught by Jesus Christ, the public worship of God, the expression of Christian spirit in the spread of the gospel among all peoples, and the encouragement of such social matters as may tend to the upbuilding of the home community. In the

teaching, disputed points shall be left to the individual conscience and the individual responsibility before God, only advising that each one be true to himself.

**ART. 3.** The membership shall consist of such as are now members of either organization, without change of the particular designation, and of such others as may be members of any evangelical church who may be enrolled accord-

ing to their denomination, and their letter kept in custody for any future need, and of those who, from time to time, shall come into possession of a religious experience through conversion. In the admission of converts, permission shall be given to enrol under whichever name the individual may desire, care having been taken to allow for the intelligent satisfaction of the conscience. In the case of the ordinance of baptism, provision shall be made for its administration according to the desire of the candidate and by such person as shall be in full sympathy with the act.

Letters of dismissal shall bear the name of the federation and shall recommend the individual to the denomination desired. Any having joined the federation shall be dismissed as from the federation.

ART. 4. The minister shall be a regularly ordained clergyman, recognized in the circles of an evangelical church having general recognition in this state; said minister shall be expected to continue his association with his own body, but in his ministrations to this federation shall recognize and live up to the basis on which it is established. He shall be the choice of a two-thirds vote of a quorum at a specially called meeting of the church.

ART. 5. The building shall be turned over to the use of the federation and shall be kept in repair by the organization during the continua-

tion of the federation. The property as such shall, for the time, remain in the hands of the present trustees of the Baptist church.

ART. 6. The officers of this federation shall be the pastor, ex officio, a clerk and treasurer, and three deacons which, with two other members to be chosen by a majority of the congregation shall constitute an executive committee and shall represent as nearly as possible the personnel of the federation.

ART. 7. The general expenses, care of building, and running expenses of service shall be borne by the federation as such and without any reference to any past ratio.

ART. 8. Four regular collections shall be taken during the year for missionary purposes and shall be divided equally between the two federated churches. Any special collection may be taken only by consent of the congregation.

ART. 9. If for any purpose either or any denomination forming a part of this federation desires a meeting for its own particular purpose, such meeting may be held provided it does not interfere with the regular services of the federation.

ART. 10. This federation shall be in effect for at least two years.

ART. 11. This constitution may be changed or amended by a two-thirds vote of a special meeting called for that purpose.

## CHRISTIANITY AND POLITICS IV POLITICS AND THE REFORMATION

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The Reformation was a composite movement in which there were many complex and even contradictory elements. The political interests were seldom sharply defined or even clearly

understood. The sweep that Protestantism made of the northern free cities is one of the most interesting and instructive facts in the movement. Yet it is hasty, for that reason, to